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Chas. C. Stow

SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES
OF
GEN. LEWIS CASS.

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GEN. LEWIS CASS.

LEWIS CASS was born at Exeter, in New Hampshire, on the 9th day of October, 1782. His father, Major Jonathan Cass, was a soldier of the Revolution, who enlisted as a private the day after the battle of Lexington. He served in the army till the close of the war, and was in all the important battles in the Eastern and Middle States, where he was distinguished for his valor and good conduct, and attained the rank of captain. He was afterwards a major in Wayne's army, and died at an advanced age, after a life of usefulness and honor, at his residence, near Dresden, in Muskingum county, Ohio. His son Lewis Cass, the subject of this biography, emigrated, at the age of seventeen, to the then North-western Territory, and settled first at Marietta; in the county of Washington. He was thus, as he was recently called by the convention of Ohio, one of the 'early pioneers' of that immense western region, which has already risen to such a magnitude in our own days, and is destined to attain one so much greater hereafter. The country north of the Ohio then contained one Territory and about twenty thousand people.

Mr Cass bore his full shares in the toils, privations, and dangers to which the defence of a new country, and its conversion from a primitive forest to the happy abodes of civilized man, are necessarily exposed. He read law at Marietta, and was admitted to the bar before the close of the Territorial Government. He commenced the practice, and, as was the custom then, visited the courts in a large district of the country, travelling on horseback, and encountering many dif-

ficulties unknown to the members of the bar at the present day.

In 1806, he was elected a member of the Legislature of Ohio, and during the session he took his part in the business of the day. He drafted the law which arrested the traitorous designs of Burr, and introduced an address to Mr Jefferson, which was unanimously adopted, expressing the attachment of the people of Ohio to the Constitution of the United States, and their confidence in that illustrious man. In March, 1807, he was appointed, by Mr Jefferson, marshal of Ohio. In execution of the duties of that office, in the business of his profession, and in the occupation of a farm in Muskingum county, where he resided, he passed his time until 1812. Then our difficulties with England assumed a portentous aspect. Her multiplied aggressions left us no recourse but war; and the statesmen of the day prepared for it with firmness. As one of the preparatory arrangements, it was determined to march a considerable force to the north-western frontier, to be ready for offensive or defensive measures, as circumstances might render it necessary. The command was given to General Hull; and a regiment of regular troops, which had fought with credit at Tippecanoe, was assigned to him. To this were to be added three regiments of Ohio volunteers. As soon as this demand upon their patriotism was known, the citizens of that State hastened to the call of their country, and the force was raised without delay or difficulty. Mr Cass was among the volunteers, and was elected to the command of the third regiment. He

proceeded immediately with his regiment to Dayton, where the army was concentrated, and whence it commenced its march for Detroit. The country was a trackless forest, and much of it was low and wet. Great difficulties were interposed to the advance of the troops by the streams and marshes, and by the necessity of cutting a road. But these were overcome with the usual good will and perseverance of the American soldiers. The army reached Detroit on the 4th of July, 1812.

Official information that war would be declared, overtook them in the wilderness; but the declaration itself was not received until they reached Detroit. Colonel Cass was perhaps more urgent for an invasion of Canada than any officer in Hull's army. He was decidedly in favor of making an *early and decisive* movement, before the British should be prepared for the invasion. We conceive it to be no disparagement to any one to say that he was the master spirit of that army until the affair at the Canards, after which, it is known, he disapproved of every step taken by the commanding general. There can now be no doubt that Hull's army never would have entered Canada but for the persuasions of Colonel Cass. So anxious was he to push forward and do something to meet the just expectations of the Administration and the country, that he commanded the advanced detachment, and was the first man to land in the enemy's country.

On the 15th of July he was ordered to attack a British detachment stationed at the river Aux Canards, about fifteen miles from Detroit, and five miles from Fort Malden then the British headquarters. He crossed the river some distance above the enemy's post, and briskly attacked them; when after some loss, they fled. Here was spilt the first blood during the last war. Colonel Cass took possession of the abandoned position, and immediately despatched a messenger to General Hull, informing him of his success, and advising him to march immediately to Fort Malden—the road to which was opened. Had this been done, success must have crowned the operation, and the war, in that quarter, would have been over. He was howev-

er, sadly disappointed by the indecision of Hull, who ordered him to return and join the army. From this moment bad councils prevailed, the army lost all confidence in Hull, and he proceeded in his own course, regardless of the advice or remonstrance of his officers. About three weeks after the affair at the Canards, the whole army was ordered across the river to Detroit; in which time had Colonel Cass's advice been taken, Malden might have been reduced, and a secure lodgment made in Upper Canada. The order of Hull to return was not less unexpected to the army than was the disgraceful surrender at Detroit, without a shot being fired, overwhelming to the country.

On entering Canada, General Hull distributed a proclamation among the inhabitants, which, for the eloquence and high spirit that it contained, cannot be surpassed; but it was sadly in contrast with the fulfillment of its professions. Unfortunately for the country, the author of the proclamation, Colonel Cass, was not the commander of the army. Had he been so, the country would have been saved the mortification of beholding the descent from the promise to the fulfillment. As it was, he used every exertion to arouse in the commanding general that spirit of patriotism which breathes in every line of the admirable paper, but in vain. A spirit of infatuation, or something worse, seized upon Hull, and led him on, from one false step to another, until the crowning act, the surrender of Detroit, without firing a gun, completed his own ruin, and brought disgrace upon the arms of his country. It is well known to the country that both Colonel Cass and Colonel McArthur were detached from Detroit previous to the surrender, ostensibly for provisions, but, in fact, because they were unwelcome counsellors at headquarters. Stung with mortification on hearing of the surrender, Colonel Cass, when ordered to deliver up his sword, indignantly shivered it in pieces, and threw it to the earth, refusing to surrender it to the enemy.

After the surrender of Detroit, Colonel Cass repaired to Washington, to report to the Government the whole cir-

cumstances attending the expedition. He was exchanged during the winter, and in the spring was appointed a brigadier general. Shortly after this, he joined General Harrison at Seneca, where the army was collecting, destined to recover the territory of Michigan, and to take possession of the western district of Upper Canada. The preparatory arrangements being completed, and the lake being open to the transportation of our troops by the victory of Perry General Harrison commenced his movement in September, 1813 and embarked his troops at the mouth of Portage river, whence they moved, and were concentrated at Put in Bay. From here they sailed to the Western Sister, a small island off the coast of Canada, where being all collected, the final arrangements were made. The debarkation was superintended and directed by General Cass, of the army, and Captain Elliott, of the navy; and the troops landed in perfect order, expecting to meet a formidable resistance. But the enemy had fled, after destroying the public buildings at Amherstburg and Detroit, and were in full retreat for Lake Ontario. The American army immediately commenced the pursuit, and after capturing two small detachments, which offered some resistance in favorable positions, overtook the enemy at the Moravian towns on the river Thames, about eighty miles from Detroit. The British general, Proctor, proved himself unequal to his command. Having some days the start, if he designed to escape, he should have pushed his retreat as rapidly as possible. But he moved slowly, encumbered with much unnecessary baggage, and finding the American army closing upon him, he prepared for battle. The ground he chose was heavily covered with trees, and his left rested upon the river Thames, while his right extended into the woods, terminating in a marsh. This flank was occupied by the Indians, who it was intended should turn the American left wing and attain the rear. The army moved so rapidly that many of the troops were left behind, and a small portion only of General Cass's command was in the battle; they were stationed immediately in

front of the enemy's artillery, which commanded the road, with directions to charge upon it as soon as the action commenced. General Cass volunteered his services, together with Commodore Perry, to assist General Harrison; and at the moment of the charge of Colonel Johnson's regiment, which decided the fate of the day, General Cass took a position with the right wing of it, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, and accompanied it in its charge upon the British line. It was a dangerous experiment to charge a line of disciplined British soldiers by undisciplined mounted Americans; but valor supplied the place of discipline, and, notwithstanding the resistance, that brave regiment broke through the line, and instantly the enemy was thrown into confusion, and threw down their arms, happy to escape with their lives. The British general, Proctor, fled almost at the commencement of the action, and was pursued by General Cass, with a detachment, for some miles but could not be overtaken.

It is well known, that in this important battle, General Cass bore a prominent part, fully sharing in the exposure and dangers of the conflict. An eyewitness, writing some twelve years since says:

"In the autumn of 1813, I well recollect General Cass, of the Northwestern army, commanded by Harrison and Shelby. He was conspicuous at the landing of the troops upon the Canada shore below Malden, on the 27th of September, and conspicuous at the battle of the Thames, as the volunteer aid of the commanding general. I saw him in the midst of the battle, in the deep woods upon the banks of the Thames, during the roar and clangor of fire-arms, and savage yells of the enemy. Then I was a green youth of seventeen, and a volunteer from Kentucky."

General Harrison, in his report of the battle of the Thames, dated October 9, 1813, says:

"I have already stated, that General Cass and Commodore Perry assisted me in forming the troops for the action. The former is an officer of the highest promise, and the appearance of the brave Commodore cheered and animated every breast."

The battle of the Thames terminated the Northwestern campaign, and put an end to the war in that quarter, but not to the difficulties or importance of the command. The United States being once

more in the possession of the Territory of Michigan, and of the Province of Upper Canada, General Cass was assigned, temporarily, the command of the district, and General Harrison withdrew with his army. On the 9th of Oct. 1813 he was appointed by President Madison Governor of Michigan, at that time one of the most important civil offices within the gift of the Executive. He was the civil as well as military Governor of a large Territory, having many hundred miles of exposed frontier, filled and almost surrendered with numerous tribes of hostile Indians, in the pay of the British Government, and constantly excited to acts of hostility by British agents.

As a proof of the defenceless state of the country, it may be mentioned, that incursions were made by the Indians, and some persons made prisoners and others killed within sight of the town of Detroit, and three expeditions of mounted militia hastily collected, were led by Governor Cass in pursuit of the Indians, and some of them were killed within hearing of the town.

A single incident will show the nature of these excursions in the forests in pursuit of the Indians. General Cass's servant, who rode immediately in his rear, had a personal rencontre with an Indian who started from behind a tree, and having discharged his rifle, attacked him with the butt-end, and was killed after a short conflict.

But peace came to put an end to this state of things. The executive power of the Territory was almost unlimited, and the legislative power was in the hands of the Governor and judges until 1819. That Governor Cass performed well his highly important and delicate duties, the whole body of the people of Michigan will bear us witness; and the fact of his having been seven times nominated by four successive Presidents, and seven times confirmed by the Senate, without a single vote against him in that body, or a single representation against him from the people over whom he presided—a state of things unexampled in the history of our Territorial Governments—is a sufficient proof of the wisdom of his administration.

In the discharge of his duties as Su-

perintendent of Indian Affairs, Governor Cass was called upon to enter into many negotiations with the Indian tribes, and often under circumstances of great peril and responsibility. He formed twenty-one treaties with them, and extinguished their title to nearly one hundred millions of acres of land; a vast domain acquired for the United States, but upon terms so just and satisfactory to the Indians, that no complaint was ever made by them upon the subject.

There are two incidents connected with the formation of these treaties, which strongly illustrate Governor Cass's judgment and decision of character. In the expedition of 1820, it became his duty to inform the Indians at Sault de St. Marie, of the intention of our Government to establish a military post there, and to fix upon the site for the same. The chief of the tribe was openly opposed to the United States, and in the pay of the British Government. In consequence of this, they heard the intention of Governor Cass, with apparent ill-will, and broke up the councils, with the most hostile feeling. On returning to their encampment, they removed their women and children into Canada; and having prepared themselves for battle, raised the British flag, as a token of defiance. Governor Cass had but a small detachment of soldiers with him, while the Indians numbered eight hundred warriors. Unaccompanied, except by his interpreter, he advanced directly into their midst, and, with his own hands, pulled down the flag, trampled it under his feet, and afterwards burned it, ordering the interpreter to inform the Indians that 'they were within the jurisdiction of the United States, and that no other flag than theirs could be permitted to wave over it.' The moral influence of this bold act had the desired effect; the Indians returned the next day to the council, and the treaty was concluded, without any further threats or insults. On arriving at Green Bay, in 1827, for the purpose of forming a treaty, Governor Cass found that the Winnebago Indians had not yet come in; and as the object of the treaty was to settle difficulties among some of the tribes, the non-appearance of the Winnebagoes was an

evidence of their desire for war rather than peace. He immediately reembarked on board n's birch canoe, for their camping ground, to prevent any hostilities, and to bring them to the treaty ground. He rapidly pursued his voyage up to the Fox river, across the portage, and down the Wisconsin, to the place of encampment. Taking with him only his interpreter, he went up to the encampment, where he found them in warlike mood, and determined not to treat. Threats and entreaties were alike unavailing with this exasperated tribe. He left them, and returned to his canoe. As he turned to go to the river, a young warrior raised his gun, and taking deliberate aim at him, pulled the trigger; but providentially, the gun missed fire. This is the only instance of violence ever offered to him during the long period of his intercourse with the Indians. He proceeded immediately to Prairie du Chien, where he recognized the inhabitants, and placed them in a condition of defence, and returned to the treaty ground. By his prompt and energetic movements he prevented extensive hostilities, the end of which no man could know.

In 1831, Gen. Cass was called by Gen. Jackson to take charge of the War Department, and his removal from Michigan Territory was marked by a universal expression of regret. His colleagues in the Cabinet were—Mr Livingston, Mr McLane, Mr Woodbury, and Mr Taney—men who possessed the confidence of the President, and soon acquired that of the country. The characteristic traits of General Jackson's administration have now passed into history. It was bold, prompt, honest, and national. It sought no dangerous constructive powers, and it endeavored carefully to exercise those of which it was the trustee, for the American Confederation. The great questions of the bank, of the removal of the deposits, of nullification, of the French indemnity, and of the Creek and Cherokee difficulties—three of which involved delicate points connected with State rights—occupied its attention, and were all happily disposed of. Few if any, now call in question the wisdom of General Jackson's course

upon these important subjects, though it is difficult now to realize the intense anxiety they excited, and the momentous consequences which hung upon their decision.

So far as the War Department necessarily took any immediate course in these questions, it was prompt and energetic, and met with the approbation of the country. At the portentous period of nullification, the military orders were firm, but discreet, and it appeared by a message from the President, in answer to a call upon that subject, that no order had been at any time given to "resist the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina, within the chartered limits of said State." The orders to Gen. Scott informed him, that "should, unfortunately, a crisis arise, when the ordinary power in the hands of the civil officers should not be sufficient for the execution of the laws, the President would determine the course to be taken, and the measures to be adopted; till then he was prohibited from acting."

The same caution marked the order to the troops when there seemed to be danger of a collision with the authorities of Alabama, arising out of occurrences upon the lands of the United States in that State. In proof of this, we quote the following extract of a letter from the War Department, written by Governor Cass to Major McIntosh, and dated October 29, 1833 :

"SIR: Your letter of the 21st instant to Major General Macomb has been laid before me; and, in answer, I have to inform you that you will interpose no obstacle to the service of legal process upon any officer or soldier under your command, whether issuing from the courts of the State of Alabama, or of the United States. On the contrary, you will give all necessary facilities to the execution of such process. It is not the intention of the President that any part of the military force of the United States should be brought into collision with the civil authority. In all questions of jurisdiction, it is the duty of the former to submit to the latter, and no considerations must interfere with that duty. If, therefore, an officer of the State, or of the United States, come with legal process against yourself, or an officer or soldier of your garrison, you will freely admit him within your post, and allow him to execute his writ undisturbed."

In 1836, General Cass was appointed minister to France, and immediately resigned his post as Secretary of War.

On returning from the department, he received a letter from General Jackson expressing warm personal feelings toward him, and commending his whole official conduct. He sailed from New York in the month of October. As diplomatic relations had not been fully re-established with France, he was directed to proceed to England, and there ascertain the views of the French Government. He found that a French minister had been appointed to this country, and he immediately repaired to Paris and took up his residence there. After his recognition, his first official duty was to procure the interest due upon the twenty-five millions of francs indemnity, which had been retained when the principal was paid. After some hesitation this was effected; and thus this great controversy, which at one time threatened such grave consequences, was happily closed.

In 1837, General Cass made a tour to the East. He visited Italy, Sicily, Malta, Greece, the Islands of the Archipelago, Constantinople and the Black Sea, Egypt, Palestine and Syria. He was at Florence, Rome, Palermo, Athens, Corinth, Eleusis, Salamis, and the battle fields of Platæa, Lenctra, Chronæa, and Marathon—at the plains of Troy, at Alexandria, Cairo and the Pyramids, at Jaffa, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, Nazareth, the Sea of Tiberias, Tyre, Sidon, Baalbec, and Damascus. Memorable places these, and calculated to excite strong emotions in the mind of an American who had passed a large portion of his life amid the toils and privations of a new country.

After his return to Paris, General Cass resumed the duties of his mission, and continued in their regular execution till its termination. He was proverbial for his kindness and hospitality to his countrymen, none of whom were denied his attentions, and few of whom visited Paris without being invited to his house. His observations upon the Government and people of France were given to the public in the pages of the *Democratic Review*, in an article entitled 'France, its King, Court, and Government,' which most of our readers will probably recollect. Among

other literary papers he published in this country, was one upon the French tribunals of justice, which contained much information interesting to an American, and in which the author expressed his decided condemnation of the system of the English common law, looking upon it as a code originating in feudal and almost semi-barbarous times, and utterly unsuited to our condition and institutions. This opinion is fast gaining ground, and we trust the time is rapidly approaching when this relic of feudal tyranny—this perfection of sense as it is called, but this perfection of nonsense as it in many cases is—will give way to reason and justice.

In 1841 arose the well-known question of the quintuple treaty, in which General Cass acted a prominent and an efficient part. The British Government, in its scheme of maritime superiority, which it never abandons, any more than its plans of territorial aggrandizement, projected a plan, by which, under the pretence of abolishing the slave trade, her ships of war would have been enabled to search and examine, and ultimately to seize, the vessels of other nations at their pleasure. This plan was to form a treaty, to which the five great Powers of Europe should be parties, by which means a new principle in the law of nations would be established, and our flag, among others, prostrated at the feet of England. This treaty was negotiated and actually signed by the ministers of the five Powers—those of England, France, Russia, and Austria—before the nature of the transaction was fully understood by the world. It became disclosed before the ratifications were exchanged with the French Government. General Cass published a pamphlet which entered deeply into the whole matter, and which was translated into French and German, and extensively circulated upon the continent. It awakened the public attention, and created a great sensation even in England. The *London Times*, in announcing it, said:

"It is a shrewd performance, written with some spirit, much bold assertion of facts, and a very audacious unfairness of argument, which is rather an using, when contrasted with a cer-

tain tone of gentlemanly candor which is occasionally adopted even in the very act of performing some of his most glaring perversions."

In addition also to the pamphlet, he presented a protest to the French Government against the ratification of the treaty. In doing this, he stated that he had no instructions to pursue such a course, and adds—

"I have presumed, in the views I have submitted to you, [M. Guizot, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs] that I express the feelings of the American Government and people. If in this I have deceived myself, the responsibility will be mine. As soon as I can receive despatches from the United States, in answer to my communications, I shall be enabled to declare to you either that my conduct has been approved by the President, or that my mission is terminated."

But he did not deceive himself. His course was warmly applauded by the American people, who are ever alive to national interest and honor, and coldly approved by the Government.

The following short extract will exhibit the spirit which pervaded this memorable paper:

"But the subject assumes another aspect, when they (the American people) are told by one of the parties that their vessels are to be forcibly entered and examined, in order to carry into effect these stipulations. Certainly the American Government does not believe that the high Powers, contracting parties to this treaty, have any wish to compel the United States, by force, to adapt their measures to its provisions, or to adopt its stipulations. They have too much confidence in their sense of justice to fear any such result; and they will see with pleasure the prompt disavowal made by yourself, sir, in the name of your country, at the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies, of any intentions of this nature. But were it otherwise, and were it possible that they might be deceived in this confident expectation, that would not alter in one tittle their course of action. Their duty would be the same, and the same would be their determination to fulfil it. They would prepare themselves with apprehension indeed, but without dismay—with regret, but with firmness—for one of those desperate struggles which have sometimes occurred in the history of the world, but where a just cause and the favor of Providence have given strength to comparative weakness, and enabled it to break down the pride of power."

The success of this scheme, so long cherished, and so long projected on the part of England, turned upon the ratification of France. With it she could hope to establish this new principle in mari-

time law, and with that attain her darling object of maritime supremacy. But the opposition of two such commercial nations as the United States and France to this interpolation would have rendered hopeless its general recognition. Hence her efforts to accomplish this measure; and as, for more than half a century, she had not failed in any great object of her policy, her pride and interest were equally united in this. Her journals, therefore, were filled with the subject. It occupied the attention of her government, her people, and her press; and her diplomatic agents through Europe were active and persevering. While the subject was under discussion in the French Chamber of Deputies, the eyes of Europe were directed to Paris, anxiously watching the result. That result was soon manifested. The public opinion of France spoke too loudly to be resisted. The Government gave way, and refused to ratify a treaty, negotiated under its own directions, and signed by its own Minister. The part which General Cass bore in this transaction is well understood and appreciated by his countrymen; and, if any doubt existed on the subject, it would have been removed by the abuse heaped upon him in the English journals, and by the declaration of Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, that his efforts contributed in a great degree to the rejection of the measure.

An American writing from Europe, in Niles's Register, March, 1842, says:

"General Cass has hastily prepared a pamphlet setting forth the true import and dangers of this treaty. It will be read by every statesman in Europe; and, added to the General's personal influence here, will effectually turn the tables on England. The country owes the General much for his effectual influence with this Government."

The London Times, of January 5, 1842, says:

"The five Powers, which signed the late treaty, for the suppression of the slave trade, will not allow themselves to be thwarted in the execution of this arrangement by the capricious resistance of the cabinet at Washington."

It is not a little curious, in reading over the papers relating to this transaction, to see how some of the party journals of the day in the United States censured the minister for his interference

in foreign concerns; and foretold, very confidently, that he would be rebuked by the French Government. And the London Times, of May 16, 1842, states, with apparent exultation, that the venerable patriot, who has just been called from among us, (Mr Adams,) said in Congress, that he regretted General Cass

"Should have so completely forgotten the wholesome rules of the founders of his country, as to interfere, without instructions from his Government, in a delicate negotiation between the great Powers of Europe."

This 'delicate negotiation' directly involved one of the most precious rights of the United States—that of sailing the ocean undisturbed and in peace. To prevent the consummation of such a project, was not to interfere with other nations, but to prevent other nations from interfering with us. As to the French Government, it took no such view of the matter. The answer of M. Guizot to General Cass, was in a very good spirit, and exhibited the best feeling to the United States. He stated that the treaty had not been ratified, and disavowed all designs of doing anything whatever unfriendly to the United States.

On the 17th of September following this transaction, the news of the ratification of the Ashburton treaty reached Paris, and Governor Cass immediately resigned. His reasons for so doing we gather from the following extracts of letters to Mr Webster:

"It is unnecessary to push these considerations further; and in carrying them thus far, I have found the task an unpleasant one. Nothing but justice to myself could have induced me to do it. I could not clearly explain my position here without recapitulation. My protest of 13th February, distinctly asserted that the United States would resist the pretension of England to search our vessels. I avowed, at the same time, that this was but my personal declaration, liable to be confirmed or disavowed by my Government. I now find a treaty has been concluded between Great Britain and the United States, which provides for the co-operation of the latter in efforts to abolish the slave trade, but which contains no renunciation by the former, of the extraordinary pretension, resulting, as she said, from the exigencies of these very efforts, and which pretension I felt it my duty to denounce to the French Government. In all this, I presume to offer no further judgment than as I am personally affected by the course of the proceedings, and I feel they have placed me in a false position, whence I can escape but by returning home with the least pos-

sible delay. I trust, therefore, that the President will have felt no hesitation in granting me the permission which I asked for."

In December, 1842, General Cass returned to the United States. He was received by the citizens of Boston and New York with every demonstration of respect. His bold stand on the ninth-ple treaty had excited the feelings of the people in his favor, and he was every where hailed as the champion of the freedom of the seas and the rights of American citizens. At New York he was addressed upon political subjects, to which he furnished a brief reply, stating his unshaken attachment to the principles of the Democratic party, and his hostility to a national bank. On his route to the west, he was received at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Columbus, Ohio, by the Governors and Legislatures of those States, who came out to meet him, and escorted him to their towns. At Detroit, the Governor, Legislature, city authorities, and people came out to welcome him home, as children welcome the return of a long absent father. On the 8th of January he was addressed by a committee of the Democratic State Convention of Indiana, upon political questions, against a national bank, opposed to the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, opposed to a tariff for protection, "that the revenue should be kept to the lowest point compatible with the performance of its constitutional functions," and opposed to altering the Constitution by abolishing the Executive veto; that he should not be a candidate for the Presidency unless nominated by the Baltimore Convention, and that he would support the nominee of that Convention.

On the 4th of July, 1843, General Cass delivered an oration at Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the completion of the Wabash and Erie canal. In this oration, while contrasting the condition and prospects of this country with the nations of the Old World, he says:—

"I have stood upon the plain of Marathon, the battle-field of liberty. It is silent and desolate. Neither Greek nor Persian is there to give life and animation to the scene. It is bounded by sterile hills on one side, and lashed by the eternal waves of the Egean sea on the other. But Greek and Persian were once

there, and that decayed spot was alive with hostile armies, who fought the great fight which rescued Greece from the yoke of Persia. And I have stood upon the hill of Zion, the city of Jerusalem, the scene of our Redeemer's sufferings and crucifixion and ascension. But the sceptre has departed from Judah, and its glory from the capitol of Solomon. The Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, the Turk, and the Crusaders have passed over this chief place of Israel and have left it of its power and beauty. In those regions of the East where society passed its infancy, it seems to have reached decrepitude. If the associations which the memory of their past glory excites are powerful, they are melancholy. They are without gratification for the present, and without hope for the future. But here we are in the freshness of youth, and can look forward with rational confidence to ages of progress in all that gives power and pride to man, and dignity to human nature. It is better to look forward to prosperity than back to glory."

In the summer of 1843, General Cass received the following letter from Gen. Jackson:—

HERMITAGE, July, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR: I have the pleasure to acknowledge your very friendly letter of the 25th of May last. It reached me in due course of mail; but such were my debility and afflictions, that I have been prevented from replying to it until now; and even now it is with great difficulty that I write. In return for your kind expressions with regard to myself, I have to remark, that I shall ever recollect, my dear General, with great satisfaction, the relations, both private and official, which subsisted between us, during the greater part of my Administration. Having full confidence in your abilities and republican principles, I invited you to my Cabinet; and I can never forget with what discretion and talents you met those great and delicate questions which were brought before you whilst you presided over the Department of War, which entitled you to my thanks, and will be ever recollected with the most lively feelings of friendship by me.

But what has endeared you to every true American, was the noble stand which you took, as our minister at Paris, against the quintuple treaty, and which, by your talents, energy, and fearless responsibility, defeated its ratification by France—a treaty intended by Great Britain to change our international laws, make her mistress of the seas, and destroy the national independence, not only of our country, but of all Europe, and enable her to become the tyrant on every ocean. Had Great Britain obtained the sanction of France to this treaty, (with the late disgraceful treaty of Washington, —so disreputable to our national character and injurious to our national safety,) then indeed we might have hung our harps upon the willows, and resigned our national independence to Great Britain. But, I repeat, to your talents,

energy, and fearless responsibility, we are indebted for the shield thrown over us from the impending danger which the ratification of the quintuple treaty by France would have brought upon us. For this act, the thanks of every true American, and the applause of every true republican, are yours; and for this noble act I tender you my thanks.

I admired the course of Dr. Linn in the Senate in urging his Oregon bill; and I hope his energy will carry it into a law at the next session of Congress. This will speak to England a language which she will understand—*That we will not submit to be negotiated out of our territorial rights hereafter.*

Receive assurances of my respect and esteem.
ANDREW JACKSON.

To the Hon. LEWIS CASS.

In the spring of 1844, General Cass, in reply to interrogatories upon that subject, wrote a letter, declaring himself in favor of the annexation of Texas.

In the month of May, following, the Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore, to nominate candidates for President and Vice President. On the first balloting, General Cass received eighty-three votes, and continued to rise till, on the seventh, he received 123 votes. Had another ballot been taken that day, General Cass would, without doubt, have been nominated. Before the assembling of the Convention on the following day, Mr Polk was brought forward as a compromise candidate, and, after two ballotings, received the nomination.

On the day that the news of the nomination of Mr Polk reached Detroit, a meeting of the democracy was held, at which General Cass, in an able and eloquent speech, gave his warmest support to the nomination, and declared his readiness to enter the contest to secure its success. In pursuance of this, he accepted the invitation of the Nashville Committee, and was present at the great Nashville Convention in August. His arrival was announced by the firing of cannon, and he was received with every demonstration of popular enthusiasm.—Of his speech there, a leading paper says:—

"We did not attempt a sketch of the eloquent and powerful speech that was made by General Cass, for we felt that nothing short of its publication entire, word for word and sentence for sentence, as he uttered it to admiring thousands, would do him a full measure of justice. It was the master effort of a great statesman ;

and the popular thunders of applause with which it was received by the fifty acres of freemen in attendance rung through the valleys and reverberated from hill to hill, exceeded any thing that we had ever heard before."

General Cass spent some time with General Jackson at the Hermitage—When they parted, the scene was most impressive and affecting. An eye-witness remarks, 'The tears of the veterans were mingled together as they bade each other a last farewell.'

In compliance with the popular demand, General Cass took the tour of the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. He everywhere met with the most enthusiastic reception from the people.—He was hailed as the FATHER OF THE WEST. But a great change had been effected since first he came among them. The lofty forests which he then traversed were now fruitful fields; the lonely cabins which he protected from the fire-brand of the savage, were transformed into populous cities; the Indian war-path was converted into the railroad; the harbors upon the lakes and rivers which he first surveyed, were now the seats of commerce and of wealth; and the scattered population which he governed were now a great people. The crowds which attended his progress through those States seemed rather the triumphal procession of a conqueror, than the peaceful attendants of a private citizen.

The following incidents at the public meeting at Norwalk, Ohio, on the 17th of September, are taken from the Democratic newspaper published at that place:—

While a number of revolutionary soldiers were being introduced to General Cass, one of our citizens approached the General, and asked if he remembered him. Upon replying that he did not, he gave the following account of their first meeting: "In the spring of 1813, Fort Meigs was besieged by the British and Indians, and the militia of Ohio were called out to march to the relief of the fort. General Cass was appointed to the command. Six thousand assembled at Upper Sandusky, of whom two thousand were selected to proceed on to the fort. The marshes and woods were filled with water, making the road almost impassable. The commanding general had not yet arrived, but was daily expected. On the second day of the march, a young soldier, from exposure to the weather, was taken sick. Unable to march in the ranks, he followed along in

the rear. When at a distance behind, attempting with difficulty to keep pace with his comrades, two officers rode along, one a stranger, and the other the colonel of his regiment. On passing him, the Colonel remarked, 'General, that poor fellow there is sick; he is a good fellow though, for he refuses to go back; but I fear that the Indians will scalp him, or the crows pick him, before we get to Fort Meigs.' The officer halted, and dismounted from his horse. When the young soldier came up, he addressed him: 'My brave boy, you are sick and tired, I am well and strong; mount my horse and ride.' The soldier hesitated. 'Do not wait,' said the officer; and, lifting him upon his horse, with directions to ride at night to the General's tent, he proceeded on foot to join the army. At night, the young soldier rode to the tent, where he was met by the General with a cheerful welcome, which he repaid with tears of gratitude. That officer was General Cass, and the young soldier was the person addressing him, our worthy fellow-citizen, John Laylin." The General, remembering the circumstance, immediately recognized him. Mr. Laylin remarked, "General, that act was not done for the world to look upon; it was done in the woods, with but three to witness it."

Another: Our old friend Major Parks, on being introduced to General Cass, exclaimed, with much animation, "General, I thank God that I am able to see you! I fought by the side of your father, Jonathan Cass, and your uncle, Daniel Cass, at the battle of Bunker's Hill. Your father was sergeant of the company, and I was a corporal. We were brothers together during the war. God bless you, General, for his sake." The General was deeply affected in meeting the friend and companion of his father; while the old veteran, with eyes sparkling, recounted the scenes through which they passed together in days of danger and strife—the times that "tried men's souls."

Another anecdote of General Cass, while on his tour through Ohio, was related, with much spirit, by the late gallant and lamented General Hamer.—The carriage containing General Cass was one day stopped by a man who, addressing the General, said: 'I can't let you pass without speaking to you. You don't know me, General.' General C. replied that he did not. 'Well, sir, (said he,) I was the first man in your regiment to jump out of the boat on the Canadian shore.' 'No, you were not, (said Gen. Cass;) I was the first man myself on shore.' 'True, (said the other;) I jumped out into the river, to get ahead of you; but you held me back, and got on shore ahead of me.'

The result of the contest in 1844 is well known. The vote of every Western State, save one, and that by a mea-

gre majority, was given for Mr Polk.—To the efforts of General Cass, and his great personal popularity exerted in favor of Mr Polk, much of this is to be attributed. In the following winter, Gen Cass was elected to the Senate of the United States, and took his seat on the 4th of March, 1845. In the formation of the committees of the Senate, Gen. Cass was unanimously tendered the post of Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, which, however, he declined. On two subsequent occasions, the same position has been offered him, but he has uniformly declined it.

In December, 1845, General Cass introduced resolutions in the Senate relative to the national defences, with particular reference to the condition of our affairs with Great Britain, growing out of the Oregon question. These resolutions he supported in a speech, of which the following is an extract, referring to the course which should be pursued in maintaining our rights to the territory in question :—

“As to receding, it is neither to be discussed nor thought of. I refer to it but to denounce it—a denunciation which will find a response in every American bosom. Nothing is ever gained by national pusillanimity. And the country which seeks to purchase temporary security by yielding to unjust pretensions, buys present ease at the expense of permanent honor and safety. It sows the wind to reap the whirlwind. I have said elsewhere, what I will repeat here, that it is better to fight for the first inch of national territory than for the last. It is better to defend the door-sill than the hearth-stone—the porch than the altar. National character is a richer treasure than gold or silver, and exercises a moral influence in the hour of danger which, if not power itself, is its surest ally. Thus far, ours is untarnished; and let us all join, however separated by party or by space, so to preserve it.”

In the month of March following, Gen. Cass delivered his celebrated speech on the Oregon question. As his speech has been circulated and read very generally, a mere allusion to it here is all that would appear necessary; but the following extract expresses so fully the sentiment of every patriotic American, that it is worthy of record :—

“It pains me, sir, to hear allusions to the destruction of this Government, and to the dissolution of this Confederacy. It pains me, not because they inspire me with any fear, but because we ought to have one unpronounceable

word, as the Jews had of old, and that word is *Dissolution*. We should reject the feeling from our hearts and its name from our tongues. This cry of ‘*Wo, wo, to Jerusalem,*’ grates harshly upon my ears. Our Jerusalem is neither beleaguered nor in danger. It is yet the city upon a hill, glorious in what it is, still more glorious, by the blessing of God, in what it is to be—a landmark, inviting the nations of the world, struggling upon the stormy ocean of political oppression, to follow us to a haven of safety and of rational liberty. No English Titus will enter our temple of freedom through a breach in the battlements, to bear thence the ark of our Constitution and the book of our law, to take their stations in a triumphal procession in the streets of a modern Rome, as trophies of conquest and proofs of submission.

“Many a raven has croaked in my day, but the augury has failed, and the republic has marched onward. Many a crisis has presented itself to the imagination of our political Cassandras, but we have still increased in political prosperity as we have increased in years, and that, too, with an accelerated progress unknown to the history of the world. We have a class of men whose eyes are always upon the future, overlooking the blessings around us, and forever apprehensive of some great political evil, which is to arrest our course somewhere on this side of the millenium. To them we are the image of gold, and silver, and brass, and clay, contrariety in unity, which the first rude blow of misfortune is to strike from its pedestal.

“For my own part, I consider this the strongest Government on the face of the earth for good, and the weakest for evil. Strong, because supported by the public opinion of a people inferior to none of the communities of the earth in all that constitutes moral worth and useful knowledge, and who have breathed into their political system the breath of life; and who would destroy it, as they created it, if it were unworthy of them, or failed to fulfill their just expectations.

“And weak for evil, from this very consideration, which would make its follies and its faults the signal of its overthrow. It is the only Government in existence which no revolution can subvert. It may be changed, but it provides for its own change, when the public will requires. Plots and insurrections, and the various struggles, by which an oppressed population manifests its sufferings and seeks the recovery of its rights, have no place here. We have nothing to fear but ourselves.”

The part taken by General Cass in the subsequent exciting controversy on this question, and his vote in opposition to the treaty, are too well known to require further notice. Having been trained in the school which taught him, in our intercourse with foreign nations, to ask for nothing but what is right and to submit to nothing that is wrong, he had the

moral courage to stand up for the right, whatever might be the consequences.

During this session of Congress, hostilities commenced between the United States and the Republic of Mexico.—General Cass advocated the most energetic measures for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and for carrying it into the heart of the enemy's country.

In the winter of 1847, the 'Wilmot Proviso' was introduced into the Senate, as an amendment to the three-million bill, by a Federal Senator from New England. The design of the mover was evidently to defeat the passage of the bill, to which it was to be attached, and to embarrass the Administration in the prosecution of the war. General Cass voted against the proviso, for reasons given in his speech on the occasion.

It was during the sessions of this Congress that the tariff of 1846, and the independent treasury, were established. It is not alone to the exclusive champion of free trade, and the ultra advocate of a hard money currency, that the opponents of protection and the enemies of a paper currency are to look for the defeat of those measures. Such men are usually in the pursuit of some theoretical abstraction, which gives them but little influence with practical men. But it is to men of large and liberal views, whose strength of character and influence carry conviction with their action, that the country is indebted for radical and beneficial reforms. General Cass gave to these great measures the weight of his influence and his zealous and unflinching support. At the close of that Congress, General Cass was invited, by the Democratic members of the Legislature of New York, to partake of a public dinner at Albany, as a mark of their appreciation of his brilliant public services, and their estimation of his character as a man. This honor, however, he declined.

In August, following, he delivered an address before the literary societies of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, at the annual commencement of that institution. The societies afterward prepared an elegant gold headed cane, with appropriate devices, which was presented to him in Washington, on the 4th of March, 1848.

On the meeting of the present Congress, General Cass was elected chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs—a post for which he was most eminently qualified, and which, as he had been unanimously selected, he considered it his duty to accept. His course as chairman of that committee, and his views upon the war question, have been seen in the daily proceedings of the Senate. The following brief reply, to Mr Mangum, is probably as good a summary of his opinion as can be given :

"Now, with respect to the progress of the war, it is said that General Scott is going on from town to town, and from city to city, conquering all before him. I am very glad to hear it. I hope that the commanding general will continue to go on in this way. If he does so, I have no doubt he will conquer Mexican obstinacy, and thus conquer a peace. I have already expressed my opinions with regard to the war in Mexico, and have nothing to say on the subject now, except to tell the Senator from North Carolina, what I had the honor to say to the Senator from South Carolina, that the adoption of any resolutions in this Senate with regard to any danger—if danger there be—in the progress of this war, would be but as the idle wind. You might as well stand by the cataract of Niagara, and say to its waters 'flow not,' as to the American people 'annex not territory,' if they choose to annex it. It is the refusal of the Mexican people to do us justice that prolongs this war. It is that which operates on the public mind, and leads the Senator from North Carolina to apprehend a state of things which he fears, but which, for myself, I do not anticipate. Let me say, Mr President, that it takes a great deal to kill this country. We have had an alarming crisis almost every year as long as I can recollect. I came on the public stage as a spectator before Mr Jefferson was elected. That was a crisis. Then came the embargo crisis—the crisis of the non-intercourse—of the war—of the bank—of the tariff—of the removal of the deposits—and a score of others. But we have outlived them all, and advanced in all the elements of power and prosperity with a rapidity heretofore unknown in the history of nations. If we should swallow Mexico tomorrow, I do not believe it would kill us. The Senator from North Carolina and myself may not live to see it, but I am by no means satisfied that the day will not come in which the whole of the vast country around us will form one of the most magnificent empires that the world has yet seen—glorious in its prosperity, and still more glorious in the establishment and perpetuation of the principles of free government and the blessings which they bring with them."

In December, 1847, General Cass gave his views at length upon the 'Wilmot Proviso,' in a letter to Mr Nicholson, of

Tennessee. In that letter, he avowed himself opposed to the measure, and to the exercise of any legislation by Congress, over any of the territories of the United States, respecting the domestic relations of their inhabitants. He believed that all questions of that nature should be settled by the people themselves, who ought to be allowed 'to regulate their internal concerns in their own way,' and that Congress has no more power to abolish or establish slavery in such territories, than it has to regulate any other of the relative duties of social life—that of husband and wife, of parent and child, or of master and servant. He said, in conclusion:—

"The 'Wilmot Proviso' seeks to take from its legitimate tribunal a question of domestic policy, having no relation to the Union, as such, and to transfer it to another, created by the people for a special purpose, and foreign to the subject-matter involved in this issue. By going back to our true principles, we go back to the road of peace and safety. Leave to the people, who will be affected by this question, to adjust it upon their own responsibility and in their own manner, and we shall render another tribute to the original principles of our Government, and furnish another guarantee for its permanence and prosperity."

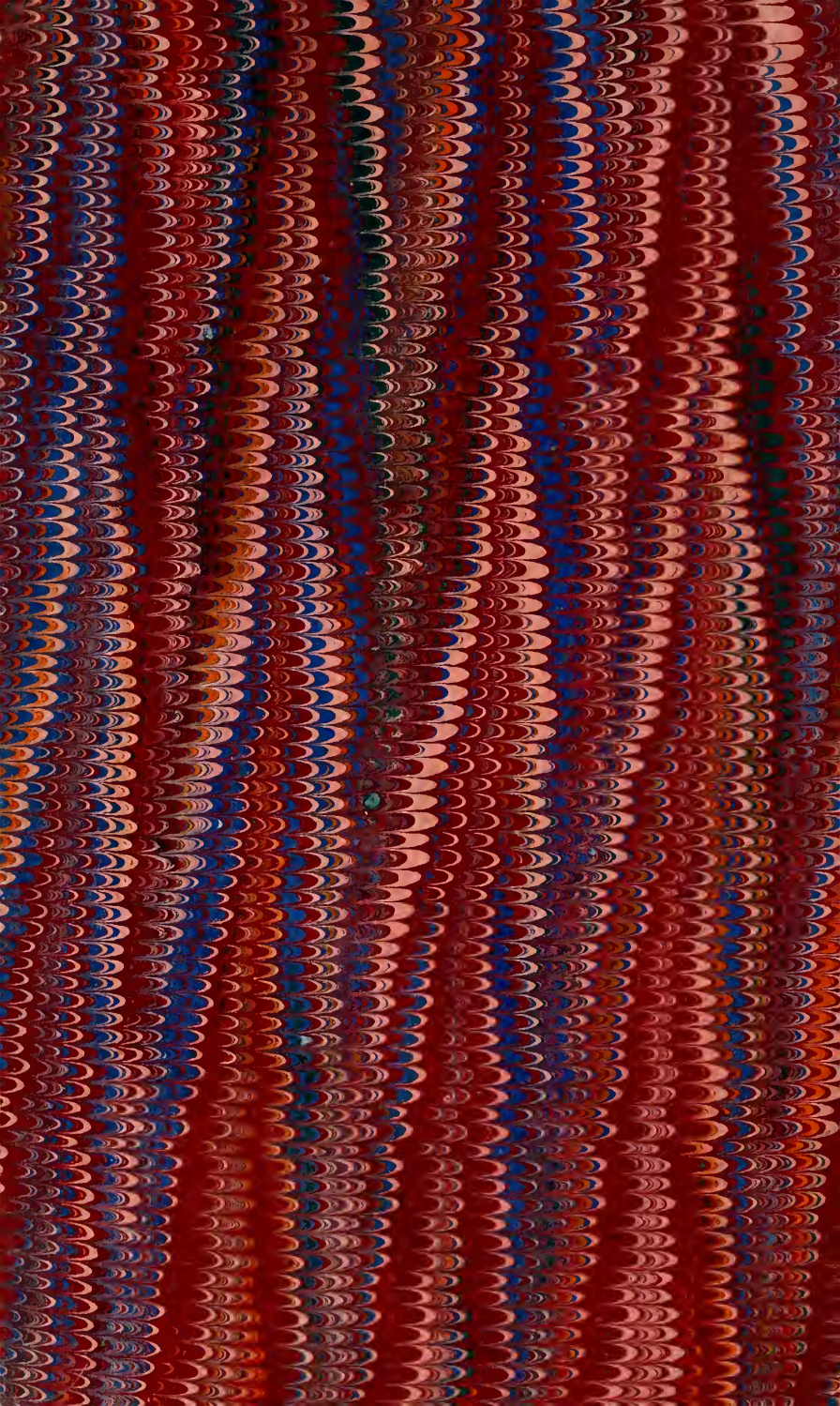
The Democratic State Convention of Ohio, on the 8th of January, 1848, declared in favor of General Cass for the Presidency, with a unanimity unequalled in the previous history of the State. Although there was much difference of opinion in the selection of a candidate

for Governor, yet the popular sentiment in favor of General Cass, and the conviction that with him as the candidate their State could be placed among the foremost of the Democratic States of the Union, induced an almost unanimous expression in his favor. (At the last election in the State of Ohio, the popular vote was democratic by a majority of 1,563.) The State Convention of Michigan has also unanimously placed him in nomination for the Presidency. In the Democratic State Convention, of Pennsylvania, held at Harrisburg, on the 4th of March, 1848, a resolution, in the highest degree complimentary to General Cass, was unanimously reported by the committee, and adopted with acclamation by the convention.

It is not necessary to refer to the numerous public demonstrations and the leading journals which have given expressions in his favor in New England, the Middle States, the West, and the South. Public opinion, looking to his brilliant services, sterling integrity, and unflinching fidelity, has pointed to him as *THE MAN FOR THE TIMES*, and the proper exponent of the American Democracy. Plain and unassuming in his manners, kind and generous to a fault, frank and social in his intercourse with his fellow-men, he is, in every sense of the word, a Democrat.

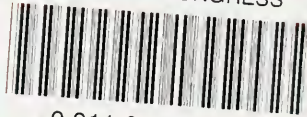
WASHINGTON, *March, 1848.*







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